

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISTANB 00124 111437Z POSS DUPE
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 DOE-11 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-03
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FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9569
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL IZMIR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISTANBUL 0124

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, TU
SUBJ: DOMESTIC PETROLEUM SUPPLIES

REF: ANKARA 9261

1. ISTANBUL BASED MOBIL EXECUTIVES CONFIRM REPORTS (REFTEL)
THAT TURKEY IS RECEIVING CRUDE OIL ONLY ON CASH PAYMENT BASIS
FROM ITS TRADITIONAL SUPPLIERS, IRAQ AND LUBYA. MOBIL, BY FAR
THE LARGEST PRIVATE IMPORTER OF CRUDE, HAS DEALT ON THE SAME BASIS
SINCE EARLY 1977, ALTHOUGH AS A GESTURE TO THEN PRIMIN ECEVIT
DURING HIS BRIEF TENURE FOLLOWING NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN JUNE, 1977,
MOBIL INCREASED ITS EXPORURE LIMIT TO \$85-90 MILLION, WHERE IT
PRESENTLY STANDS. SINCE DECEMBER, 1977, WHEN FOREIGN EXCHANGE
TRANSFERS SLOWED MARKEDLY, THE ATLAS REFINERY, OWNED AND
OPERATED BY MOBIL, SHELL, AND BP, HAS REMAINED AT BETWEEN
40 AND 50 PERCENT OF CAPACITY. MOBIL UNDERSTANDS THAT EACH OF
THE GOT REFINERIES IS ALSO RATIONING CRUDE BY RESTRICTING
OPERATIONS TO APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT OF CAPACITY.

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2. MAJOR IMPACT IN ISTANBUL AREA IS SHORTAGE OF FUEL OIL.
ABOUT ONE HALF OF CONGEN EMPLOYEES ARE WITHOUT FUEL FOR
HEATING AND HOT WATER, OR RECEIVE HEAT ONLY PERIODICALLY AS
DWINDLING SUPPLIES ARE RATIONED BY LANDLORDS. GASOLINE AND
BOTTLED PROPANE GASE ARE IN CHRONICALLY SHORT SUPPLY, BUT SO FAR
HAVE NOT DISAPPEARED FROM THE MARKET FOR PROLONGED PERIODS.

3. COMMENT: MOBIL EXPECTS SHORTAGES OF ALL REFINERY PRODUCTS TO REMAIN CHRONIC FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES. A MORE ALARMING POSSIBILITY IS STRIKES/LOCK OUTS AT THE THREE FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES, WHICH WOULD CLOSE ATAS REFINERY AND ALL MOBIL, SHELL, AND BP DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS. OCTOBER STRIKE THREATS RESULTING FROM BREAKDOWN IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS AT ALL THREE COMPANIES WERE POSTPONED BY GOT FOR LEGAL MAXIMUM OF NINETY DAYS. INJUNCTION EXPIRES JANUARY 12 FOR SHELL AND END OF MONTH FOR MOBIL AND BP, LEADING TO SPECULATION THAT THE BELEAGUERED OIL COMPANIES MAY, IN FACT, WELCOME STRIKES IN ORDER TO AVOID FURTHER GOT PRESSURE TO FINANCE MORE CRUDE IMPORTS, AND AT SAME TIME TO CRUSH WHAT THEY CONSIDER EXCESSIVE WAGE INCREASE DEMANDS OF THE UNIONS. CONGEN WILL ATTEMPT TO MONITOR SITUATION CLOSELY AND WILL REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.
HOUGHTON

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